SOUTH VIET NAM In Struggle

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CENTRAL ORGAN OF THE SOUTH VIET NAM NATIONAL FRONT FOR LIBERATION

editorial

Penalize the Paris Agreement breakers with most thunderous blow

AT the beginning of October 1973, in a note to the member countries of the International Conference on Viet Nam and of the International Commission, the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the RSVN brought to their notice the present tension in South Viet Nam and warned that if the US and the Saigon regime continued violating the Paris Agreement and embarked into new military adventures, it would reserve for itself the right to take appropriate steps to protect its people and territory, airspace and waters.

On October 15, the Command of the South Viet Nam PLAF issued an order to all officers and men of the regular army, regional army, militia and guerilla units, and liberation security force all over South Viet Nam to remain on their guard and stand ready to retaliate for Saigon war activities, in defence of the liberated areas, the people's lives and property and the Paris Agreement.

THE move was prompted by US and Saigon systematic and serious breaches of the most important provisions of the Paris Agreement, more particularly those concerning the cease-fire. Incessant encroachments, police actions, carried out under the "pacification" programme, mass arrests, terror, massacres of civilians had been going on in our areas. In its zone, the Saigon regime had been suppressing all democratic liberties, imposing hundreds of taxes on the people, to extort from them money for its war and as a result things had gone from bad to worse for our fellow countrymen. The return of political prisoners had been deliberately delayed, atrocities and murders perpetrated against many of them and tens of thousands of arrests made. At the Consultative Conference, every sensible proposal of the PRG had been obstinately turned down while the routine activity of the Two-Party Joint Military Commission and the International Commission had been interfered with.

Recently, having received a shot in the arm from the US, the Thieu gang have become more clamorously truculent, undertaken furious inroads into the PRG areas involving sizeable infantry, air, artillery forces. 73% of the leaves in Army Corps 3 have been cancelled, great scale deployments staged in preparation for fresh military operations. Compounding his slanderous charges against the PRG, Thieu has ordered his troops to "strike first", to "act first", in utter disregard of the Paris Agreement and in a defiantly rash manner.

ON the other hand, instead of withdrawing its armaments and war material and dismantling its military bases, the US has been illegally introducing into South Viet Nam hundreds of thousands of tons of fresh weaponry. It has kept on the spot a military machinery consisting of several tens of thousands of men to mastermind Saigon land-grabbing actions and "pacification" raids. The US hand in all Thieu's sabotage moves against the Paris Agreement has also been increasingly apparent. Such manoeuvres would have been impossible if it were not for US aiding and abetting. Thieu's trigger-happy attitude and acts cannot be dissociated from US scheme to continue its military involvement in South Viet Nam and to use him to wreck peace and the accords signed.

What has been happening in the last eight months has supplied ample evidence of such US neo-colonialist design to gradually deny the existence of two administrations, two armies and two zones of control as recognized by the Paris Agreement. This and nothing else is at the bottom of the present tension, the current bloodshed and terror, the agony of 200,000 unreturned political prisoners, the detention of tens of thousands of persons in concentration camps, the abolition of all democratic freedoms, the prevailing suffering and misery of the South Vietnamese masses. The South Viet Nam powder keg, thought to have been put out, is running the risk of being reignited.

It is natural that in face of such a juncture, the PRG has had to contemplate drastic measures to defend the Paris Agreement, its liberated territories, and the fruits of its revolution. There is no other choice.

THE South Vietnamese people are deeply attached to peace. It was for its sake that they grimly confronted the US aggressors on the military and diplomatic fronts and forced them into concluding a peace on the basis of respect for the Vietnamese people's fundamental national rights and the South Vietnamese people's genuine right to self-determination and ensurance for the achievement of peace, independence, democracy, and national reconciliation and concord in South Viet Nam, pending ultimate peaceful national reunification. Therefore, the PRG unswerving line is to always abide by, and fully implement, together with the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam, the Paris Agreement and the June 13, 1973 Joint Communiqué.

Meanwhile the Thieu regime has never ceased setting its face against the ending of the war and restoration of peace in Viet Nam. It showed great reluctance to sign the Paris Agreement and after being forced into doing it, it has been doing nothing but frenziedly wreck it. Such behaviour is only consistent with the fascist and warlike nature of a hireling, a product of US colonialist war policy. Consequently, no one else but the US must be blamed for the explosive situation in South Viet Nam at present.

For all their firm resolve to honour the pledges taken, the PRG and the South Vietnamese people can not remain indifferent to US-Saigon breaches of faith. In compliance with their Command's orders, the South Vietnamese PLAF and people have inflicted due punishment upon Saigon land-grabbers in Thua Thien, Quang Da, Quang Nam, Binh Dinh, Tay Nguyen, Tay Ninh. They have thus served a stern warning on the fire-eating US agents in Saigon, which promises more severe penalty in case they refuse to mend their ways.

SOUTH VIET NAM In Struggle

Defend the liberated zone at all costs

Under Saigon control

Growing misery

WHILE perusing Saigon's papers one cannot help feeling a great anxiety over the plight of the people, particularly of the honest people there.

No Rice

Rice, the staple food has been put under strict control and subject to ruthless seizures. The governor of Chau Doc province allows each family to keep 15 litres at a time, and any excess will be considered to be illegal supply to "the communists", according to *Dien Tin* (Telegraph). He has also threatened to have a man shot dead for each litre of rice sent to the blockaded areas along the border.

Things are the same in other provinces. *Chinh Luan* (Political Comment) bitterly remarked on Oct. 12 that "after so many 'revolutionary measures' the people were now haunted by a single concern — get just enough rice for the two meals in a day." This, however, is no easy job with rice getting increasingly scarcer and dearer. One hundred kilos in the High Plateaux now fetch as much as 25,000, or even 30,000 piastres, and even at such exorbitant prices there is not enough rice available. *Dai Dan Toc* (Great Nation) quoted on Sept. 22 a trade union official as saying, "We have not enough rice for sale in Saigon, let alone in the High Plateaux." The situation can be summed up adequately in these remarks of *Chinh Luan* in its Oct. 7 issue: "Those who have a job to do find it very hard with their salaries to keep pace with the soaring price of rice, while the unemployed are vainly looking for work and people who want rice will find rice-shops closed to their faces."

Office Employees in a Fix

Life is not easy for the white-collar workers either. *Song Than* (Tidal Wave) wrote on Sept. 27: "It must be frankly admitted that the life of public servants today is a far cry from what it used to be a decade ago. This, of course, does not apply to a handful of corrupt elements. To eke out their meagre earnings, office personnel will gladly do anything including waiting at table, driving a taxi-cab, or even taking paying pillion-riders on their motorbikes. This failing, they will have to resort to more drastic measures, and the first is to stop sending their children to school. Indeed, the people are tightening their belts. But they are not doing so just to please the government. They are forced to do so by the Ministry of Economy, particularly by its price-raising policy." A school-teacher had this to say in the Sept. 2 issue of *Dien Tin*: "In their off-hours teachers have to sell rides on their motorbikes or do anything to get extra money to feed their children." "This is not a shame but a pride to teachers", he rightly commented. "But to the society that has forced teachers to stoop so low, it is a shame indeed."

Now, with the course on "Administrative Revolution" going on in Vung Tau, public employees are no longer in a position to carry on such jobs. They must attend the course and must try to graduate with good marks, otherwise they will be sacked at a moment's notice. To enforce "discipline," Thieu has ordered trainees in the second course, beginning on Sept. 26, to keep in doors for three full weeks.

Unemployment High

Heavy taxes, high prices of newsprint and dwindling circulations have entailed the closing of many papers. Hence the unemployment of thousands of workers. "*Hoa Binh*" (Peace) wrote on Sept. 14: "For the press it never rains but it pours for a year now. In September last year, the "007 Bombshell" (the Press Regulations-*Ed.*) was immediately followed by a sharp rise in the price of newsprint, with scarcely a respite, which made life intolerably hard for newsmen."

The present unemployment figure of over 2 million includes not only reporters and editors but also office employees, war wounded, and school graduates. *Dien Tin* on Sept. 19 feared for those who had worked for the US armed forces and who had not yet returned to the countryside partly on account of continued hostilities there and partly because of their being conditioned to city life. The same paper took the Thieu administration to task on Sept. 27 for trying to maintain the war establishment, saying "Wouldn't it be much better to demobilize soldiers and send them to the countryside to do farm work while developing industry in the cities, which would be a wise use of manpower and also a good way to cope with unemployment, than to maintain a great number of men with nothing useful for them to do?" On Oct. 7, *Song Than* pointed out that it was the Thieu administration that was to blame for worsening joblessness. "It is impossible to shirk one's responsibility," the paper said, "whatever one's pretexts may be, for the unemployment of so many people at present."

Swelling the Army of Scavengers and Beggars

The poor are fine-combing city garbage dumps for anything that may help them subsist. An article carried by *Dien Tin* on Sept. 26 said: "Unless your heart is made of wood you will be shocked any time you pass the garbage dumps in Le Van Duyet Street. Your heart will bleed at the sight of women and children in rags searching for old bottles, shoes or any salvageable vegetables." And the author of the article exclaimed: "Poor Saigonese! How can they live in such conditions? How can they live on with prices and taxes going up every day while their earnings shrink? And just while so many half-starved people are living on the city's leavings, a number of fortunate people, lousy with money, are thriving in clover."

Again, on Oct. 1, *Dien Tin* wrote:

"The 'Army of Beggars' in Saigon is swelling with many new recruits. Though strong, they are jobless, which has reduced them to this plight. And 'army' is no overstatement. Wherever you go in this city you will be surrounded by beggars."

Social Evils Rampant

Hooliganism, robbery and prostitution are being encouraged by the Thieu administration. "In most of the streets you will find roaming bands of long-haired teen-agers displaying outlandish dresses and speaking foul languages. They snatch away your purses, break into your houses, and even kill you for pay, in defiance of the law" (*Dien Tin*, Sept. 28). "Pot-addiction is no longer a concealed evil in this city. The youths are gathering in parks to take "trips" under the very nose of the Municipal Administration" (*Dan Luan* — People's Voice, Oct. 1). What is at the bottom of all these evils? The answer has been supplied by the press in Saigon despite rigorous censorship. It is none other than the Thieu administration, traitor to the country and a tool of American arms-dealers.

NGOC BAO

Land-grabbers punished

THE Central Nam Bo liberation armed forces intercepted Saigon intruders without let up in September, wiping out or capturing over 2,800 of them by writing off 4 companies and decimating 2 battalions. They also destroyed 12 military vehicles, downed 7 aircraft, and removed 22 posts illegally set up by the Saigon army. In Ben Tre province alone, close to 420 Saigon troops were put out of combat, and 2 posts levelled.

The same month, the liberation forces in the province of Quang Nam, Quang Da, Quang Ngai, Binh Dinh, Phu Yen and Khanh Hoa put out of action some 4,500 Saigon intruders belonging to 20 platoons and squads and trouncing dozens of companies and even battalions of the Saigon army. Many Saigon weapons and war means were captured or destroyed. The forces defending Quang Ngai province knocked out of combat over 1,500 intruders, destroyed 20 military vehicles, and razed or captured 5 Saigon army posts newly planted in the liberated zone.

In the last 3 days of September and the first 2 days of October, guerillas and the regional liberation army wiped out about 700 Saigon troops engaged in "pacification" raids in various districts of Quang Da, Quang Nam and Binh Dinh provinces.

In the four days ending Oct. 10 in the highland provinces of Kontum and Gia Lai, the PLAF repelled 13 Saigon battalions operating in the liberated areas west of Pleiku town, inflicting 130 casualties, wrecking 4 military vehicles and 3 howitzers, and shooting down one war plane.

Also in September the regional forces of Cu Chi district, Gia Dinh province, wiped out over 120 Saigon rice-looters. In Tra Vinh province in the period between Sept. 1 and Oct. 10, guerillas and the regional army took a toll of more than 700 "pacification" agents and looters. Besides, 2 Saigon army posts were destroyed, and 70 assorted guns were seized by the liberation forces.

Along the Cai Lon river and in Go Quao and Giong Rieng districts, Rach Gia province, the PLAF sank 3 troopships and wrecked 2 armoured personnel carriers. They also inflicted a great number of casualties.

Shelling base camps of Saigon raiding forces in Cai Lay township and intercepting Saigon land-grabbers in various rural areas early in October, the My Tho province PLAF caused some 200 casualties to the Saigon army, destroyed 3 armoured cars and blew up many supply dumps and barracks. At the same time, guerillas drove Saigon troops out of 4 posts illegally put up in the liberated areas of Cai Lay district.

The regional army in Vo Tung, Tay Ninh province shot down an L-19 reconnaissance plane on the morning of Oct. 12. The pilot was killed.

The liberation forces defending Quang Tri and Thua Thien province foiled dozens of Saigon operations in the first half of October, doing short work of more than 230 intruders and capturing dozens of guns and 4 motor launches. They also retook Bach Ma and a number of localities north of Co Bi which had been seized by the Saigon army.

All told, the liberation forces put out of action over 3,400 Saigon troops across South Viet Nam in the first 11 days of October. In addition, 21 Saigon army posts were removed. They also wrecked 19 military vehicles and military trains, knocked down 2 aircraft, bagged more than 300 assorted guns, and knocked out of commission a good quantity of big guns and ammunition.

The PLAF and people of South Viet Nam determined to make the cease-fire work, will punish the peace-wreckers still more severely, unless the latter stop breaking the Paris Agreement.

A disinvolvement farce

UNDER the terms of Article 4 of the Paris Agreement, the US has pledged itself to cease its military involvement or its intervention in South Viet Nam's internal affairs.

Such a 'disingagement consists namely in :

— stopping all US military activities against the territory of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam by ground, air and naval forces, wherever they may be based,

— ending the mining of the territorial waters, ports, harbours and waterways of the DRVN and permanently deactivating all the mines planted,

— withdrawing totally from South Viet Nam US troops, military advisers, and military personnel,

— dismantling all military bases of the US and of the other foreign countries,

— abstaining from introducing into South Viet Nam troops, military advisors and military personnel, armaments, munitions and war material except those which have been destroyed, damaged, worn out or used up after the ceasefire and are subject to supervised replacements.

Those obligations were practically to be reciprocated with the return of US military personnel and foreign civilians of the US side captured by the DRVN or the RSVN armed forces.

The ending of US intervention in South Viet Nam's internal affairs postulates for the non-support of the Thieu fascist regime, observance and respect of the provisions of the Paris Agreement which recognized the temporary co-existence of two administrations, two armies, two zones of control and three political forces in South Viet Nam and stipulate the ensurance of the right to self-determination of its people.

But if the DRVN and PRG have strictly honoured their commitment regarding for example the return of the US military personnel and foreign civilians, the Nixon administration has begun with an inadmissible interference and grave violation of the Paris Agreement by announcing that it will continue to recognize the Saigon regime as "the only legal government in South Viet Nam." It has carried on its military commitment to the latter in various ways, thereby creating a grave situation and making a new quadripartite meeting in Paris necessary.

In virtue of the June 13, 1973 Joint Communiqué, "the United States shall cease immediately, completely and indefinitely aerial reconnaissance over the territory of the DRVN..., resume mine-clearance..., supply to the DRVN means which are agreed to be adequate and sufficient for sweeping mines in rivers..." All that meant that the US had failed in its obligations and pledged itself now to fulfil them.

Many months have passed since. We are now in the 9th month of the implementation of the Paris Agreement. US disinvolvement, political and military alike, has only proved to be a shameless political dupery and deception.

The last units of the US Expeditionary Corps left South Viet Nam like tourists, with only handbags, as their arms, munitions and war material remained behind at Thieu's disposal. US and allied military bases also were untouched for the Saigon dictator's use. The reason given was that the former were too cumbrous for air transport. As for the bases they had been allegedly transfered to the client administration on January 27, 1973, which operation had rendered Article 6 of the Paris Agreement simply pointless.

Moreover, 20,000-odd Americans, or the strength of one and a half infantry divisions have stayed behind to drill, officer and "advise" the Saigon troops and see to their logistics. These civilians entrusted with military jobs have been given obviously non-civilian accommodations, the MACV (Military Aid Command in Viet Nam) buildings, also nicknamed Eastern Pentagon, located right inside the Tan Son Nhut military airfield.

This "civilianization" move is but a new formula of "Vietnamization" of the war which must go on with the Saigon army plus US armaments and officering.

In fact, neither of the two ceasefires provided for in the January 27, 1973 Paris Agreement and the June 13, 1973 Joint Communiqué has been strictly complied with by the Saigon administration. The hostilities have been going on with Saigon inroads into the PRG areas and police operations in its own zone of control. Despite its official termination, the war, though not yet widespread, has been no less murderous. To feed it, US or US-chartered transports have unloaded tens of thousands of tons of weaponry in Da Nang and Cam Ranh, in defiance of the ban explicitly worded in Article 7 of the Paris Agreement.

The money for it has been supplied by the US federal budget. E. Richarson, former Defence Secretary, testified to the House Defence Appropriations Committee that US military aid to Southeast Asia the bulk of which went to Saigon amounted to an estimated 2.9 billion dollars, for the current fiscal year (1973-1974) but it actually ran to 4,069 billion or an increase of nearly 50% over last fiscal year's corresponding expenditures. According to the proceedings of the Senate Armed Forces Committee, 3/4 of the total were earmarked for activities, maintenance and purchase of armaments in South Viet Nam.

As far as the DRVN is concerned, the US has not completed its mine-clearance nor definitively ceased its aerial reconnaissance over North Viet Nam.

In addition, US troops have been regrouped in the neighbourhood of Viet Nam, ready to embark into a new military adventure. The command of the 7th Air Force under General J. Vogt has been transfered not far from Saigon, and even nearer to Hanoi, to Nakhon Phanon, on the Mekong, in front of the Lao town of Thakhet. Thailand has been turned into an entrenched camp for 50,000 GI's with numerous air bases: Ubon, Udon, Nakhon Phanon already mentioned, Hamphong, Korat, Utapao, Takli and the Sattahip naval base which could, the experts say, become a US Singapore.

As for the 7th Fleet, it is still prowling off the DRVN territorial waters.

In case of a new conflict, the Pentagon can rapidly field the US garrisons in the Philippines (15,000 men), in Taiwan (8,000 men), in South Korea (40,000 men), in Japan and Okinawa (63,000 men) and chiefly the B52 fleet from Anderson base on Guam island.

Regarding US post-Viet Nam strategy, *Current History* magazine has commented that only US tactics has changed, not US strategy.

US Ambassador Edmund Clubb has confirmed this view in diplomatic language in a recent issue of the *New York Times* : Major changes are taking place in Asia. The war has ended but the break with the past would not be easy. We are still too committed to the political and economic support of our proteges in Viet Nam, Laos and Cambodia.

It is in vain that W. Sullivan, a former aide of W. Rogers and H. Kissinger and present Ambassador to Manila, claims that the concentration of US troops in Thailand and continued stand-by of the 7th Fleet will deter an eventual North Vietnamese offensive. But to world and US public opinion, it is nothing short of a new regrouping of forces and mere changes in the stationing of US troops under a neo-colonialist US policy which has not given up its objectives or its commitments to its zealous servants.

The full blame for the present worsening tension must be laid at the door of the Nixon administration : in South Viet Nam between October 1 to 5 1973, 205 encroachment operations and 4,877 police raids accompanied by 250 artillery strikes and 153 air bombings ; in Cambodia, recrudescence of the fighting ; in Laos, new breaches of the Vientiane Agreement and the September 14, 1973 Protocol.

Nixon and his agents think they could challenge with impunity the Indochinese peoples and world and US public opinion. But they are greatly mistaken. How could "Vietnamization" which failed despite the direct support of half a million GI's, and formidable deployment of the US Air Force and Navy, succeed with the presence of 20,000 US military in civilian guise? Saigon is in the throes of economic and political troubles while the US governmental crisis is still a long way from its end, with Agnew's resignation because of corruption, bribery and tax fraud charges following the Watergate scandal, so damaging to the Presidency.

Bethmann-Hollweg and his boss, Wilham II were punished for having regarded international treaties as scrap paper. The inglorious end of Hitler and the Nuremberg condemnations were due penalties on breakers of the Paris Pact.

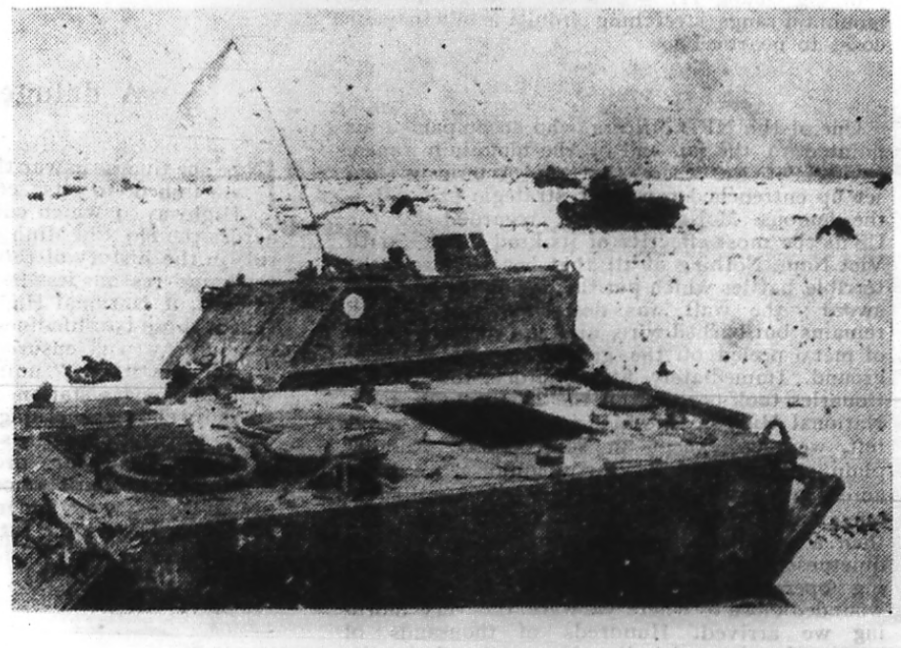
Deniers and wreckers of the 1954 Geneva Agreements, the US leaders had dragged their country into a long, costly and infamous war.

Mr Nixon has, through his representatives, signed too many times * the various agreements with Viet Nam to pretend to be unaware of their substance and renege on pledges so solemnly taken and reiterated. Does he seriously believe in an eventual imperialist backlash or in an unexpected intervention of the god of traders and thieves in favour of the Watergate's gang? Or in a providential flexibility of Viet Nam position? In this case, Henry Kissinger will not have properly learned the lesson of Ly Thuong Kiet's verse which impressed him so much during his visit to Hanoi's Historical Museum :

Over the mountains and rivers of
the South rules the
Emperor of the South,
As fated in the Book of Heaven
Oh you, barbarians who dared
invade our land,
You will be wiped out, without
mercy.

XUAN KHANH

* *In all 19 times : 5 initiallings for the Paris Agreement and its 4 Protocols, 5 signings for the same documents' bi-partite version and 4 signings for their quadripartite version, one initialling and one signing for the Paris Act, one initialling and one signing for the bi-partite Joint Communiqué and one signing for its quadripartite version.*



Fresh lesson for US bad faith:
US tanks wrecked at Cua Viet port

in the free zone of South Viet Nam

for long been in the news and still is frontpaged in the world press. In our eyes, the South was first and foremost a long and wide plain corresponding to the former demilitarized zone set up by the Geneva Agreements. The war has turned it into a *no man's land*, a free-strike zone. It is now nothing but a bleached land on which grass has reappeared shyly, piteously between incandescent stones. A perfect rectangle seared by flames marks the place of what was, as specialists in repression euphemistically call them, "prosperity hamlets." The Vinh Linh and Gio Linh people were regrouped in that concentration camp in an attempt to strike at the base of the revolutionaries who drew their moral and physical strength from the masses. Le Viet Hung, a NFL provincial committee member whose face was telling joy and anger at the same time, gave us, using an image peculiar to the Asian language, an idea of the American strategy: "It was necessary to empty the river of its water to catch the fish." Past this *no man's land* where biocide had reached the climax, the road — miraculously preserved by the Americans who were, so it seems, thinking of retaking Quang Tri — climbed a long and low mountain range stretching from the Vietnamese coast to nearby Laos.

One of the NFL officers who accompanied us pointed to the far end of the mountain range, saying "it was there that the Americans had set up entrenched camps at strategic places" — the famous McNamara line, regarded by the US as the most effective of its kind in all South Viet Nam. Nothing of all that has survived the terrible battles which put the region to fire and sword; the wall was destroyed and nothing remains but barbed wire, airstrip surfaces made of metal peeled off the ground, a pock-marked ground. Immediately after victory, the revolutionaries took position on the heights. Our road, National Highway 1 which in fact we had never left, went up except in some spots. Another plain stretched behind the mountain; we came across groups of soldiers laughing and calling to one another. We saw drills on a field. Now and then a muffled sound interrupted the apparent quietness — signalling the start of a mine-clearing operation or an accident. A man was wounded close to where we were the very morning we arrived. Hundreds of thousands of unspent bombs and bullets lay scattered in the field and paddies, ready to kill by delayed action.

We had been warned while in the North and upon arrival here to "strictly follow beaten tracks and the guide's advice."

What can be recovered

The weather was hot and stuffy. All the more so since there was no vegetation to speak of. National Highway crosses Highway 9 at Dong Ha, a large urban centre which had been completely razed in the battle of Quang Tri. It was there that we stayed. What we first saw of the town was the iron bridge cut in three points; workers' teams were finishing chopping it up with blow torches. The traffic was restored across the river by the Engineers. A junk of fishermen or farmers back from the market was passing through, its sail and its occupants, heads low. With remarquable ease, the craft threaded its way through the narrow gap between two pillars of the provisional bridge.

At Dong Ha or what has remained of it, all activities were concentrated at the market, the lungs of the city. "One should put up with what is available" so they say in Viet Nam. Among the ruins of the town, women, especially, picked up all that could be recovered to rebuild their dwellings. At what had been a service station two women cleared away rubble and put into their baskets most trivial things: bits of glass, pens, scrap-iron, etc. A generator was housed in a battered shed to provide electricity to the town from 7 p.m. Women, again, converged on the centre of the town, flail perfectly well balanced on their shoulders, the youngest of them, with an athletic gait, outwalking the eldest. Their baskets were loaded with fruit and vegetables covered with large leaves which preserve their freshness. Poultry was kept in cages made by the peasants themselves. A fortified tower, on top of which proudly fluttered the RSVN flag, dominated Dong Ha; all around lay American guns and tanks knocked out of commission. A long building had been flattened as though distorted through a glass; it seemed that a gigantic hand had dealt it a formidable blow. Heaps of cartridge-shells and machinegun cartridge-clips littered the soil.

A deluge of fire

In peace time as in war time, the fate of a country is linked to its communication network. Highway 9 which cuts Viet Nam widthwise across the Ho Chi Minh trail has played a great role in the history of this part of the world. For the same reasons its destiny has been the same as that of National Highway 1. At the intersection of those two life-lines is Dong Ha, the defence of Highway 9 is ensured by fighting units, one of which, a "hero" unit awarded with sixty or so medals, was stationed on neighbouring hills. Its daily chores: morning drill, work in the fields with peasants, meetings— in brief a transitory, half-peace half-war program. While upholding revolutionary spirit among the popular masses, preparations were under way for a peace-time economy. The people catered for the soldiers.

(To be continued)

KAMAL ZEMOURI

(Special correspondent,
Révolution Africaine—Algeria)

on the West African "battlefield"

WE headed for West Africa. As our plane left behind the desert, there appeared through its windows a dark green fringe along a meandering coastline: the Republic of Senegal.

After North Africa, Senegal was one of the first countries in this continent to establish contacts with Viet Nam. It was here that a number of Vietnamese drafted by the French to work in their colonies finally drifted. But Dakar feels proud and honoured to be a stopping-place of President Ho Chi Minh on his way to revolution at the outset of this century. With this landmark began the friendship between Viet Nam and Senegal.

Like Viet Nam, Senegal has known bitter days like in our country, the French colonialists left behind in Dakar many big buildings. But in this capital also left behind many slums ridden with poverty and diseases like the present muddy lanes in our South still under US-Thieu rule.

More than other countris area. Senegal possesses abundant natural resources. It is one of the biggest growers and exporters (above one million tons each year of peanuts in the form of dry peanut and dry peanut oil powder). Fish and shrimps are teeming in its sea and the rivers and amply supply an export industry.

Since it became independent, Senegal has done well in construction and improvemant of the people's welfare. I visited wide streets in Dakar with majestic hotels, luxurous shops, impressive universities and multi-storied villas. This city is one of the strategic gateways to Agrica both by air and by sea.

Senegal still has a big job ahead. Drought still play havoc in this country. As President Sedar Senghor has said, Senegal must further build its economy to preserve and consolidate its independence and freedom.

However, Senegal still of thinks its friends, of Viet Nam. But this friendship did not come along smoothly, thwarted as it was by the US lackeys in Saigon who threatened to cut off diplomatic relations charging that President Sedar Senghor had violated the Paris Agreement on Viet Nam with his recognition of the Provisional Revolutionary Government of South Viet Nam. Our friend remained unruffled and opened their arms to us, to the PRG, the sole authentic representative of the South Vietnamese.

A Senegalese friend has this to say about the Saigon ambassador's packing up:

"We have not yet expelled them but they have decided to go of their own will. So so much the better!"

Senegal has judiciously set up friendly relations with our people as in South Viet Nam are coexisting two administrations, two armies and two zones of control. Our friends have realized that in fact the PRG is the sole authentic representative of their independence, freedom and real self-determination and the architect of their future. How promising the young shoots of Viet Nam—Senegal friendship!

While the lackeys of the Saigon administration were decamping, Dakar extended to Chairman Nguyen Huu Tho a red carpet reception. The Dakar airport and city were alive with the RSVN and Senegalese flags, on poles, along the road, the capital, on the cars, in the hands. Most of the ministers, deputies, high-ranking officers and mass organizations were present at the airport with President Sedar Senghor. The place was resounding with drums and other instruments played by young artistes of both sexes.

The 20 km-long road between the airport and the capital was lined with crowds, who thickened as we approached Dakar. They waved flags and flowers, danced and sang or performed acrobatics. On the car radio we could hear a live commentary of the reception at the airport and the state drive to the guest house—the splendid and huge Republic Palace flying a RSVN flag and a Senegal flag on its roof. From the gate up to the main entrance a guard of honour in red cloaks and caps stood in twos with drawn swords.

These solemnities moved all of us in the delegation. We recalled Uncle Ho's visit to Dakar. Since then Viet Nam has gone a long way in the international arena, to become from an enslaved nation a champion of independence and freedom. During his stay, Chairman Nguyen Huu Tho often evoked Uncle Ho and his trip which had paved the way to his own more than half a century ago.

The Saigon administration claiming to represent the Vietnamese had established an embassy here. However, with our friends' help, we drove it away and occupied this "battlefield" in West Africa, hoisting our flag in the heart of Senegal. Our friends still had a lot to know about us so they went from one surprise to another. But old or young, man or woman, they all knew that we were "the men of old Ho," the fighters who beat the US aggressors. They highly valued our gifts which were rings made from US plane debris with these engraved letters RSVN PRG or SVN NFL. They liked us not for our beautiful dresses but for our guerilla hats and our rubber sandals. There were no higher honours than the medals they pinned on our chests!

Senegal is very akin to Viet Nam. It also has a tropical climate and fertile fields. Mango trees laden with fruit lined the roads. Factories belched smoke beside coconut orchards. Market-places dotted our way, simple straw roofs capping slender pillars. From time to time there appeared a stall nestled under a giant baobab with golden bananas or oranges. Or a girl selling fresh coconuts, an old woman peddling water melons, their heaps of fruit taller than a man like in our country some where at Tam Quan or Ben Tre.

The watchword of the Republic of Senegal is: one nation—one goal — one confidence. It is vigorously advancing in all spheres. It is experimenting the cultivation of Asian tropical plants. In Sangalcam centre we saw dwarf papaya trees with big fruit, many kinds of cabbage and turnip, maize, pea, eggplant, cucumbers... The Chinese experts who had been helping build this centre gave us a warm welcome as friends meeting one another after a long separation.

Senegal was observing its harvest festival, an occasion for the people to sing and dance to their hearts' content after long days of strenuous work. The main musical instrument in these festivities is the drum. At its "boum boum" the villagers bearing masks of hawks or buffaloes sing and dance merrily... Of course, Senegal has many other musical instruments, one of them is similar to the *T'rưng* in our Western Highlands.

But in Senegal the sound of drum is also a call to arms at the time when bows and swords were still the usual weapons. In the small museum of Gorée island like in the Ifan museum of Dakar, I saw many battle drums and picks. It is to recall that Gorée, a crescent-shaped little island, was successively occupied by the French and the British colonialists for it was a market of slaves which made the fortune of many European capitalists and an important spring-board used by the colonialists to break into Africa.

In the museum of Gorée several photos of colonialists were still displayed together with the evidences of their crimes. But here also the heroism of the Africans is testified to by the bows, swords, picks and drums of these heroes who fell for the independence of Senegal.

President Sedar Senghor looks after this independence as he cares for his verses:

18,000 leagues
Right from Marrakech
Africa greets me
Farewell to Europe.

The President is a distinguished intellectual and also a gifted poet. His poetry has stirred the hearts of people outside Senegal. For his outstanding talent, he is a simple, sedate and persuasive man.

Before their talks, President Sedar Senghor said to Chairman Nguyen Huu Tho:

"Time is on your side. I was looking forward to meeting you. It is you who have many things to tell us."

Our friends wanted to understand us better and help us.

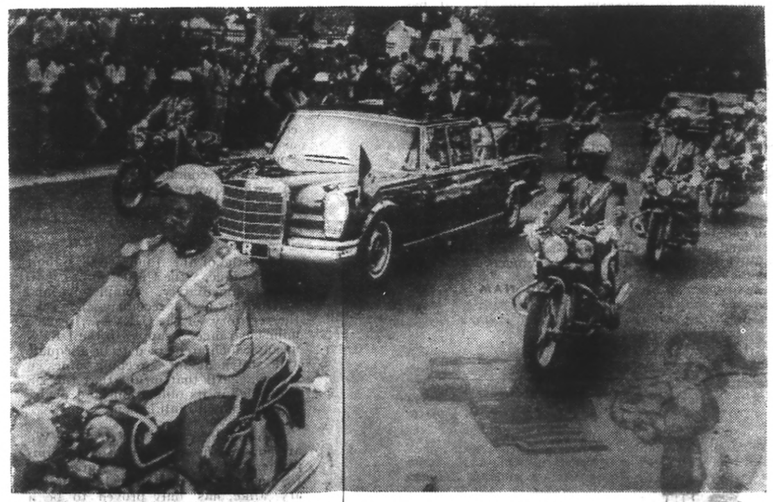
"I know that your country is waiting for the aid of friends to rapidly heal its war wounds. Poor as it still is, Senegal is ready to help you", he added with great sincerity.

On leaving Dakar, Chairman Nguyen Huu Tho squeezed President Sedar Senghor's hands and thanked him for the warm and impressive reception given to the PRG delegation. The reply came as sedate as usual:

"It is the country and people of Senegal which have to thank you and the heroic Vietnamese people for their extraordinarily gallant fight has helped Senegal conquer its independence and freedom."

How proudly our flag, the flag of the RSVN flutters in the hearts of our friends on the West African "battlefield"!

HUYNH VAN LY



Chairman Nguyen Huu Tho and President Léopold Sédar Senghor at the Republic Palace reception. Left, RSVN Foreign Minister Nguyen Thi Binh

Tens of thousands of people standing up along the road from Yoff-Dakar airport to the Government's Guest House welcoming Chairman Nguyen Huu Tho and the RSVN PRG delegation

Chairman Nguyen Huu Tho talking to senior aged representatives of tribal nationalities in the Senegalese Assembly

the DRVN in brief

Refractory alumina brick

The first batch of Sama A Alumina brick has come out of the kiln of the refractory brick factory ; which has just begun its mass production. This marks a technical advance of the refractory material industry in Viet Nam and opens up new prospects for the utilization of local raw materials in this line.

Production of pressed bamboo lattices

This kind of material is a substitute for fibrocement and corrugated iron in roofing.

It is produced in two or three corrugated plies held together by a chemical glue for use in the building of one or two-storeyed houses. Decorative coloured bamboo lattices will also be turned out.

The Cao Bang Hydropower station

The hydropower plant of Cao Bang province has been built and nearly 100 kilometres of high tension line installed.

It will supply power to the local tin mine and out-of-the-way villages in the hilly part of the province.

Construction of the layer-breeding farm

The construction of the Ba Vi layer breeding farm, consisting of about 100 buildings, big and small, has been completed. This 450-hectare centre is one of the biggest of its kind in the North.

The centre is divided into four parts : the sector of grass land poultry, the laying hen sector, the battery and mating sector and the servicing sector.

New public utilities

Nearly 500,000 square metres of temporary housing space, nearly 10,000 square metres of permanent housing space and 50,000 square metres of multi-storeyed houses have been built in big towns and cities in the North.

The construction of 7 waterworks and the installation of 30 kilometres of water pipe are under way.

Development of continuation education

Continuation schools for cadres and youths such as general education schools for toilers, schools for minority youths, for socialist working youths, workers-peasants continuation school have been opened in many provinces. Half time classes are functioning in thousands of villages for rural cadres and study-cum-labour courses are run in hundreds of villages for country youths.

Hundreds of teachers and thousands of pupils have been commended.

Articles for export

Since early this year, HaiPhong has trained thousands of workmen in the manufacture of such export lines as ready-made clothes, rush rugs, bamboo blinds, artistic handiworks. Furthermore thousands of women have been trained in lace making, a three-fold increase over 1972.

Construction of a rolling mill

The Thai Nguyen rolling mill is under construction.

The main chain of production includes such links as tempering, rolling, nickel plating according to modern methods and a system of service such as engineering and oxygen-producing workshops, scrap recovering tank, a transformer, mechanical transport, etc. The production of steel sheet and wire will make it possible for the rolling mill to meet the requirements of the initial development of North Viet Nam's industry.

Big structures like a 35-kilovolt transformer, an oxygen manufacturing factory, an engineering workshop, are about to be commissioned.

New archaeological digs

A new archaeological site has been discovered on Cat Ba island. In an excavation area of 210-square metres wide and 3-metres deep, about 500 stone implements, twenty thousand earthen fragments as well as animal and fish bones have been found.

These have enabled archaeologists to sketch the picture of life of Hai Phong sea-coast dwellers in ancient times.

The high technical standard of the stone rings, skilful use of saw, borer, grinder and the artistic level of original ceramics made by potter's wheels and particularly polished articles with crisscrossing grooves, have been confirmed ; but no traces of copper articles nor of metallurgy have been detected. Therefore, the Cat Ba findings can be dated to the period between the early and late stone age.

FOURTH SESSION OF THE VIET NAM FATHERLAND FRONT CENTRAL COMMITTEE

THE Central Committee of the Viet Nam Fatherland Front wound up its Fourth session on October 7, 1973 in Hanoi after over three days of sitting.

At that session, the Front warmly welcomed the visit of the PRG delegation headed by Dr Nguyen Huu Tho, Chairman of the Presidium of the South Viet Nam NFL and the Advisory Council to the PRG of RSVN, which stopped over in Hanoi after attending the Non-Aligned Countries' Summit and visiting countries in Africa and Europe.

The session unanimously agreed that since the re-establishment of peace, our people had won signal gains in their effort to get the Paris Agreement on Viet Nam implemented, in economic rehabilitation and development and in the gradual stabilization of production and normalization of life. Nevertheless, those are but initial successes. The US government and the Saigon administration are still deliberately and systematically violating the Paris Agreement, thereby generating tension in South Viet Nam.

The meeting remarked that as the action for the implementation of that accord is a difficult and complicated struggle, our people and armymen must increase their solidarity and fight perseveringly till total victory. They must also overcome the aftermaths of the war in order to accelerate socialist construction in the North.

The Committee's resolution defines the present task of the Viet Nam Fatherland Front as follows : "Strengthen solidarity between various sections of the people, political parties, mass organizations, religions and patriotic minded personalities, heighten their revolutionary spirit, bring into full play the sense of collective mastership and revolutionary mettle of the people ; urge the entire people to fight stubbornly for the strict implementation of the Paris Agreement on Viet Nam, keep a lasting peace, complete the national democratic revolution in South Viet Nam, eventually achieve the peaceful reunification of the country and build a peaceful, unified, independent, democratic and prosperous Viet Nam."

* * *

Here and There

THE VICISSITUDES OF LIFE

On October 10, 1973, US Vice-President Spiro Agnew appeared before the Baltimore Court, pale and trembling, the newspapers reported, and pleaded guilty to charges of tax evasion. He was sentenced to three years' on probation and fined 10,000 dollars. And on the same day at 14.05 hours he officially submitted his resignation to President Nixon. It was the first time, they said, in 140 years, since 1832, that a US Vice-President resigned during tenure of office. There is no accounting for the whirligig of time, as our scholarly ancestors used to say.

But the American press is not so philosophical. It has recalled the universal astonishment of the 1968 Republican Convention at Nixon's choice as his running-mate of Agnew, a political nonentity, though Governor of Maryland. It has dissected the Nixon-Agnew quarrel, originating from Watergate. Rumours have been abroad about Nixon's manoeuvring to divert public attention from his own mess to Agnew's. A lot of conjectures have been advanced on the selection of a new Veep, on the US President's and his Party's difficulties as regards the appointment of Gerald Ford. Not a few allusions have been made to Nixon's own tax frauds — common occurrences in a capitalist society — and a question has been asked by the major newspapers : As Nixon's implication in the Watergate scandal is much more serious than Agnew's offence, why did the latter have to go while the former remains unpunished in office ?

So after the Chile putsch, one can see... the instigators.

France's *l'Humanité* supplied on October 4 fresh evidence of the Nixon-Kissinger tandem's hand in the assassination of President S. Allende : ITT's and other US firms' "economic war" has started as early as 1970. The social and economic troubles of the last few years had been the outcome of a foreign interference backed by traitors to the country.

Shortly after Allende's coming to power, the *New York Times* published an article by Cyrus Schulberger on the anxiety of NATO over an eventual repetition of the Chilean experience in a strategic point like Italy. The author had taken part in a talk by Kissinger with other US newsmen, during which it was made clear that the US could not tolerate in Latin America any transitory form of socialist system, whether installed by revolutionary violence like in Cuba or by democratic process like in Chile. The US made it a point to "protect" Latin America and Europe as well — first and foremost France and Italy — from the Chilian-type experience. The Viet Nam war had shown what price it had to pay, if uprisings broke out. So at all costs, the situation in Chile had to be brought to a head and the trigger pulled in due time.

So Kissinger's brain children, conceived right at the advent of the the Marxist President, proved that Washington had got everything ready to make an example of him for the other countries of the world.

AFTER THE FIRE

After the fire, one can see the mice (charred, of course), used also to say our forefathers.

MORE MICE

Real ones, this time.

According to the *Dien Tin* (September 28, 1973) Thieu's Ministry of Agricultural Development ascribed the current dearth of rice in his zone to the ravages inflicted by mice "whose number run to 22 million and consume annually 200,000 tons of rice, let alone locusts and other pests."

It is a pity that the rodent kind and its allies should have no spokesmen to reply that it has existed for thousands of years and that it has not eaten more rice in 1973 than in the years when Thieu had to buy paddy from abroad and that it is the police actions, the "Phoenix" operations under the "pacification" program and the proliferation of "strategic hamlets" which must be blamed for the laying waste of ricefields and so on and so forth.

But the *But Thep* (Steel Pen) made known late September that Thieu had set up village "Committees for Regularizing the Distribution of Primary Necessities" but "before the said bodies started functioning, agents were sent to every house to requisition rice, in return for a receipt or a grin." According to the same paper a widow whose son had been drafted by Thieu resisted with a knife in hand, which is after all a right way to behave toward the tin-horn dictator's henchmen.

HUONG NAM

Inevitable collapse of US client regime in Thailand

AFTER more than ten days of grim fighting, the *Thai* people have won an initial victory over Thanom-Praphas military dictatorship, in Thailand. Thanom Kittikachorn and Praphas Charusathien had to resign as premier and vice-premier and abandon their positions as commander and deputy commander of the army and fled the country, one to the United States and the other to Taiwan.

A new cabinet has been formed under Sanya Thammasak, a lawyer and principal of the Thammasat University. It comprises fifteen members of whom only two ministers are militarymen. However, among the vice-ministers there still remain three police generals who were vice-ministers or deputy director general of the national police of the toppled administration. After assuming his post, the new foreign minister of Thailand who was a vice-minister for foreign affairs in the Thanom government, declared to the press that the new government would not affect any change in its foreign policy, especially with regard to the United States.

This major success of the patriotic movement of the *Thai* people for national independence, freedom and democracy is the result of a persistent effort over many decades. It is inseparably linked to the armed struggle and the fight of the people in the mountainous and rural areas against the policy of forcible relocation for the building of military bases and strategic roads in service of US aggressive designs. Nor can it be dissociated from the struggle of the urban population for democratic freedoms and better living conditions. This is also a logical outcome of the reactionary policy of the Thanom-Praphas clique who toed the line of the US imperialists and sold out Thailand to them, and proved themselves to be the most willing tools of the US aggressive war in Indochina and the whole of Southeast Asia over many years.

Since the beginning of this year, the *Thai* patriotic and democratic movement has gained in strength and scope not only in Bangkok but also in many provinces such as Siengmay, Nakhon, Thammarat, Razon and Nakhonsavan... drawing hundreds of thousands of participants including workers, office employees and other sections of the working people especially students and pupils. Within five months, two major student actions broke out in the capital. On October 6, 1973, the reactionary ruling clique arrested thirteen people on charge of distributing leaflets bearing the signatures of 100 student leaders, political activists and university professors and many other well-known intellectuals calling for an intensified struggle against the dictatorial regime. This added fuel to the flame. Between October 7, and 11, many meetings and sit-ins urging the release of the arrested were held in the capital. On the following days, from October 12 to 15, Bangkok saw "the biggest ever mass demonstrations in the history of Thailand," with the participation of students of the capital and from various provinces, eventually joined by large crowds of Bangkok population. On some days, especially on October 13, the demonstrations involved 400,000 people who took to the streets under the slogan "Power to the people", "We want a new constitution" and other watchwords calling for the overthrow of the Thanom-Praphas gang.

The reactionary rulers answered with ruthless repression. On the one hand they charged the arrested people with "engaging in subversive activities" and "keeping Communist literature in their houses" and on the other, mustered a big force of the army and police equipped with machineguns, tear grenades and supported by tanks and armed helicopters against the demonstrators. In the ensuing clashes, the latter seized the central police headquarters, demolished many police posts and set fire to many public offices which they said were the most corrupt. According to eye-witnesses, hundreds of dissenters were killed or wounded in the clashes, but the students finally carried the day. The new Prime Minister, Thammasak, had to declare that the new government would pay compensations to the families of the dead and wounded and promise to meet the demands of the students and promulgate a new constitution within six months.

Commenting on the event, *The London Times* wrote on Oct. 15: It may be too early to clap hands and welcome a government that has promised a change not only from a regime which they are replacing but also a string of similar regimes which have for too long a period held the monopoly of political power in Thailand.

Judging from the composition of the new cabinet as well as the statement of the new foreign minister of Thailand, this remark is not without foundation. It is also justified by the evolution of the situation in the world in the recent past, especially in this area.

With the signing of the Paris Agreement and the humiliating failure of the US imperialists in Viet Nam, new and favourable conditions had been created for the advance of the movements for national independence, democracy and social progress in this area. In many countries, even the pro-American ruling circles had had to concede that their complete dependence on the United States was outdated. In one way or another and to different degrees they had "readjusted" their policy to the new realities. One of these countries had withdrawn from the SEATO aggressive bloc. Many others had been seeking to establish or expand their relations in many fields with socialist countries. Meanwhile, in Thailand, the Thanom-Praphas clique, blinded by their selfish interests and turning a deaf ear to the legitimate demands of broad sections of the people for a prompt withdrawal of American troops from Thailand, for the dismantlement of US military bases on *Thai* territory, for democratic freedoms and welfare continued to throw in their lot and that of Thailand with the sinking boat of the Nixon doctrine.

Most recently, on October 10, 1973, Thanom Kittikachorn still clamoured that "the military and political situation in Indochina remains instable" to plead for US suspension of troop withdrawal from Thailand. In this context, the collapse of the US-backed military dictatorship in Thailand became inevitable. Still, there has been no sign of any basic change in the aggressive scheme of the US in Southeast Asia although the latter has sustained a major setback in Viet Nam and Indochina and has weakened markedly. To US imperialism, Thailand has always held a strategic position in this region. It has been clinging to that country, keeping there a considerable force: 40,000 troops and 300 aircraft including B.52 strategic bombers together with large quantities of war means stationed in six major bases. With the new administration in Thailand, whether there will be any change in the days to come to meet the aspirations of all segments of the *Thai* people for independence, freedom and democracy and to conform with the common trend of the time, remains to be seen. One thing is however certain. For the patriotic and democratic movement in Thailand, heavy tasks lie ahead: carry on and step up the battle and take it more vigorously forward in order to make Thailand a really independent and democratic country.

Many difficulties and complexities are also in store because the enemies, both within and outside the country, have not reconciled themselves to their setback. To use money and other means to split and break the ranks of the patriotic movement and eventually to crush it, has been their customary method.

Nevertheless, for all their craftiness and wickedness they are swimming against the tide. The drive of the *Thai* people which follows the common trend of the era, will surely grow into a formidable hurricane.

DINH BA

in brief ★ in brief ★ in brief

+ The Japan Afro-Asian Solidarity Committee sent on October 8 500,000 yen to the Japan Support Viet Nam Committee for the Viet Nam reconstruction fund.

It was the first contribution from the Japan Afro-Asian Solidarity Committee's campaign to raise money for Viet Nam.

+ The Wakayama Support Viet Nam Committee sent on October 15 1,000,000 yen for the Vietnamese to the Japan Support Viet Nam Committee. The total of contributions from the same organization has amounted to 6,500,000 yen since 1968.

+ A big meeting held at the Duffy Park in New York on September 20 became a stand-in demonstration throughout the day in response to the "International Week of Concern and Action for the political prisoners still detained in South Viet Nam" being held then in the United States.

+ Since late September, Jane Fonda carrying her newly-born first son Troi (after South Viet Nam hero Nguyen Van Troi) has been on a one-month march through 25 cities of the United States to arouse public opinion into action for the release of the political prisoners in South Viet Nam by the US and the Saigon administration and their strict implementation of the Paris Agreement, and the cut-off of aid to the Saigon regime by the Congress. Also with her were her husband Tom Hayden, a social activist, the well-known Congressman Holy Nillard, P. Debris, a French jailed and tortured by the Thieu clique for many years, and Bob Snowet, an ex-Viet Nam POW. The march will be followed by the Fall National Convention of the US Anti-War Organizations.

+ In its statement issued on the anniversary of Hero Nguyen Van Troi's murder by the US and Saigon (October 15), the World Federation of Democratic Youth called on "the progressive and democratic Youth of all continents to increase political solidarity with, and material assistance to, the struggle of the Vietnamese youth and people, and to make a valuable and concrete contribution to the building of a school in the liberated areas of South Viet Nam."

+ On October 10, the "Centre of Archives and Social Studies", an organization of Polish Christians, donated a sum of 10,000 zlotys to the Viet Nam national reconstruction fund.

+ Norway's national TV gave on the evening of October 1st a Vietnamese program entitled "Ho Chi Minh, the most beautiful name" and containing selected songs and dances, to mark the Norway tour by the South Viet Nam People's Liberation Song and Dance Ensemble. It featured the ebullient artistic activities in the liberated areas of South Viet Nam and highlighted the role of art as a weapon in the South Vietnamese people's fight against US aggression for national salvation. The public asked for a repeat, thereby showing their interest in it as an example of preservation of national culture.

+ The British Campaign for Peace in Viet Nam launched a drive from October 22 to 25 of demonstrations and parades in front the US and Saigon Embassies and the Prime Minister's Office in London, or US Consulates in Britain. It was aimed at pressuring the US and Saigon to free over 200,000 political prisoners from South Viet Nam's jails, end all encroachments on the PRG territories, and cease bombing and strafing the people.

+ The British-Viet Nam Committee has donated 500 pounds to the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the RSVN. Meanwhile, the Peace Committee of the North Western region of Britain has also handed a cheque of 100 pounds to a Vietnamese representative, the first collection in the drive.

+ 355 representatives of British trade unions have signed a petition to the Saigon Embassy in Britain urging US-Saigon strict implementation of the Paris Agreement on Viet Nam.

The Middle East war and failure of "Quiet American" diplomacy

THE war which has been raging in the Middle East since October 6, 1973, struck another blow at US imperialism and the Israeli reaction, its pliant tool in that part of the globe. It has spelled the Americans' growing difficulties in their scheme to bring the Arab countries to their knees.

After World War II, for economic, political and strategic reasons, the US imperialists paid particular attention to that area, which borders on three continents — Europe, Asia and Africa — and is located south of the socialist camp whose influence on it is so dreaded by the US. With the construction of the Suez Canal, in whose area the US has deployed its Sixth Fleet on a permanent patrol duty, the Middle East is to the Pentagon strategists a region of vital importance. Furthermore it is well known for its deposits of 60 per cent of the world's oil resources.

Since long, the American oil corporations, particularly the Rockefeller trust, a prop of the Republican Party now ruling the US, have therefore invested huge capitals there and raked in fat profits. With the energy crisis now looming large in the West, control of the oil supply from there appears more necessary than ever. That is precisely why the smallest political or economic upheaval there is regarded by the White House and the Pentagon as a concern to US national security. US aggressive scheme against the Arab countries is more conspicuous under the Nixon administration which makes no bones that the Middle East is given pride of place in its global strategy. In its April 18, 1973 issue, the *New York Times* remarked that American strategists had foreseen that the US would move the epicenter of its strategic interests and global straregy in the seventies to the Persian Gulf. This because of the oil in that region. In his message to Congress over fuel, President Nixon only touched upon US security. But an anonymous military official pointed that in this message, Nixon overlooked to mention that over half of the world's oil reserves already surveyed are in the Middle East. Most of the governments in this region are hostile to the US because of its support to Israel or, like Saudi Arabia or Kuweit, are strongly critical of its policy.

A commentator said that in that message the president did not use the word "Arab" once and that there lies the question.

There were many other messages to Congress in which the American President did not make any mention of the "Middle East" but US intention to impose its control on that vital part of the world was nevertheless present.

In order to keep the Middle East at any cost within the orbit of world capitalism the US imperialists and their allies have left no stone unturned to use military, political or economic means, whether covert or overt, direct or indirect, to achieve their aim, including warfare, if necessary.

Their usual and perhaps most effective method has been playing off the reactionary Zionists against the Arabs. The former have always proved to be US most faithful agents. From 1945 onwards they have three times kindled the war, and occupied Arab territories and grabbed Arab natural resources. Under the label «to maintain the balance of forces in the Middle East", the US rulers have regularly given to the Israeli aggressors all kinds of aid, chiefly military, to enable them to check the development of Arab national forces and to discharge their task as trusteess of US neo-colonialist interests in that region.

Since 1967, the Middle East has undergone far-reaching changes in the relation of forces favourable to the anti-imperialist forces. Of these, mention should be made first of the swift all-round development of the Arab countries, chiefly those bordering on Israel. Their peoples and governments have all the more clearly seen the cloven hoof of the enemy and the necessity to strengthen their own forces, thereby enhancing their resolve to liberate the parts of their lands still under the enemy's control. The solidarity of the peoples of the Arab world in this fight has been growing stronger and more effective. It has been translated into a real force in the common political and diplomatic action and in the defence of their oil interests against the multi-national monopolies. In this, they have received the warm sympathy and wholehearted support of the socialist countries, the Third World and progressive mankind. The resolution on the Middle East of the Algiers Summit was an eloquent proof of that monolithic solidarity of the Third World — composed of two-thirds of mankind — with the just cause of the Arab countries. Meanwhile the American imperialists and the Israeli reactionaries have met with greater and greater troubles. The Viet Nam war has ended in an ignominious failure for the Americans who have been facing an all-sided crisis. Their role as international gendarme has been seriously affected. Their support to various quisling regimes is no longer very effective. Their brazen interference in other countries, like the Lebanon in 1958, will certainly meet with a strong protest on the part of the force loving independence, peace and social progress. In the new balance of forces in the world as well as in the Middle East, the US imperialists and their henchmen can no longer rule the roast. Another important fact stemming from the new situation is the opposition in the US, even from the political circles, to US military adventures abroad. Street demonstrations, teach-ins and the bills passed by the US Congress calling for an end to US military involvement in foreign countries have supplied cogent proofs of a profound polarization in the US ruling circles on foreign policy.

In such conditions, in order to reach their neo-colonialist objectives in the Middle East, the American authorities must tailor their strategy and tactics to facts. They continue to support Israel unconditionally but this is not enough to ward off aggravating dangers. The quoted issue of the *New York Times* reported that Dr Kissinger had begun to revise US policy in that region and to think of solving the dilemma of US military and political support to Israel and maintenance of good relations with the Arab countries, Israel's adversaries. This is the origin of what the Western press calls "quiet American diplomacy." It is so called because it resolves the Middle Fast problem — so highly explosive — not publicly but with behind-the-scene negotiations with Arab countries. American diplomats, including State Secretary H. Kissinger and his predecessor Rogers have been trying to humour some Arab countries and to create a peace mirage in some others, so that after having increased substantially their war potential these will be emasculated by division and dissensions.

But to "run with the Arab hare and hunt with the Israeli hound" is beyond US capacity. Clearly the tricky "Nixon doctrine" cannot do away with the contradiction between aggression and victims of aggression. The hostilities in the Middle East, as pointed out above, are a deadly blow dealt at the "quiet American diplomacy." From the developments of the war, one can draw the following conclusions:

Firstly, the Arab peoples and governments, especially those at war, are possessed of a sense of purpose and war potential more powerful than the US and Israel expected. In this war the initiative is in the hands of the Arab countries. The Israeli army, once bragged as "invincible" has been put on the defensive. Its units, the trump-card of a "lightning war", are badly mauled.

Secondly, the solidarity of the Arab world is stronger and more effective than believed by the enemy.

Thirdly, international support, especially the assistance afforded by non-aligned countries and the socialist camp, to the Arab countries is stauncher than that anticipated by the US and Israel.

These are the decisive factors of victory in the long and difficult war waged by Arab countries against the US and Israel. We are gratified to see that these factors have become all the more decisive in the present trial of strength.

THE Middle East war is still raging. Dreading Israel's eventual defeat, the US imperialists are stepping up their intervention in the war. On the one hand, they pour new quantities of up-to-date weapons into Israel; on the other, they give themselves the appearance of a mediator.

In their October 15 and 16 statements, the Presidents of Egypt and Syria affirmed the determination and solidarity of Arab countries to fight for national liberation. Inversely, the ever-increasing intervention of US imperialism has heightened the vigilance of the Arabs and world's peoples and strengthened their solidarity and resolve to fight.

Standing in the frontline of the struggle against US imperialism and its lackeys, the South Vietnamese people staunchly uphold the Arab peoples' national liberation cause. Enlightened by their own experience, our people totally endorse the recent statement made by Chairman Nguyen Huu Tho on the Middle East question:

"We are firmly convinced that with their traditional undauntedness, and the solidarity and support of peoples of non-aligned countries and all over the world, the Egyptian, Syrian and other fraternal Arab peoples will certainly win final victory over the Israeli aggressors and US imperialists, preserve their national independence, and liberate their territories still under enemy control, thereby contributing to the defence of peace in the Middle East and in the world."

VAN DUC

Israeli troops taken prisoner

SOUTH VIET NAM CENTRAL ORGAN OF THE SOUTH VIET NAM NATIONAL FRONT FOR LIBERATION